

IS FANTASY FOOTBALL AN ADDICTION?



Op-ed by Jennifer Faringer, MS.ED, CPP-G, Director of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – Rochester Area

A staggering 114.5 million viewers tuned



JENNIFER FARINGER

into Super Bowl 56 in February 2022, breaking all records for the most viewed broadcast in American history. Super Bowl 57 in 2023 is expected to have an even larger viewing audience.

While many are watching the game for fun, illegal wagers in prior years were estimated at over \$3.8 billion, and that includes gambling on big games such as the Super Bowl.

Rising numbers of individuals are betting on fantasy sports through online forums or office pools. Economist Rodney Paul, Ph.D, from Syracuse University's Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, estimated that over 2.5 million fantasy leagues exist in the United States.

The Fantasy Sports Trade Association (FSTA) estimates 56.8 million people in the US and Canada participate. The average profile according to FSTA data is a 37-year-old male with a college degree who spends \$465 a year on fantasy sports, and it's no surprise that the favorite fantasy sport is football.

Fantasy sports giants including Draft Kings and FanDuel have attempted to rebrand daily fantasy sports gambling as games of skill. People enjoy playing fantasy sports without realizing the potential negative outcomes.

When the gains continue to be negligible, and the activity can escalate to being compulsive, this may be a sign

of problem gambling.

Participating in fantasy sports may increase the enjoyment of the experience for some, especially as the level of risk increases. Research has found there is an association between participating in fantasy sports and gambling problems. Sports gamblers were found to significantly spend more than social gamblers per betting session.

The National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) estimated that two million adults in the United States meet the criteria for a gambling addiction, with between four and six million people being impacted by problem gambling.

Criteria for a gambling disorder includes a need to gamble with increasing amounts of money, restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop, experiencing a loss of control, a preoccupation with gambling, has jeopardized family or work relationships, lies to conceal extent of gambling, and borrows money to continue to chase one's losses.

If you are concerned that your gambling habits or those of a loved one have become a problem, help is available. For more information on local resources and referrals to counseling or treatment, contact the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – Rochester Area or the Finger Lakes Problem Gambling Resource Center.

To learn more and/or request a presentation for your community group, contact NCADD-RA or visit our website at www.ncadd-ra.org. Coming soon to NCADD-RA's Education and Training calendar will be Gambling Brief Intervention to Treatment (GBIRT) workshops to provide a baseline of information and steps to engage, intervene and refer.

Stop the Stigma Surrounding Addiction

Prevent – Treat – Recover
Addiction is a Brain Disease
There is HOPE

To learn more or to schedule a presentation, contact NCADD-RA at (585) 719-3480



Resources and referral directories

for Monroe County: ncadd-ra.org/resources/
for the eight counties surrounding Monroe County:
ncadd-ra.org/services/finger-lakes-addiction-resource-center
ncadd-ra.org

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – Rochester Area

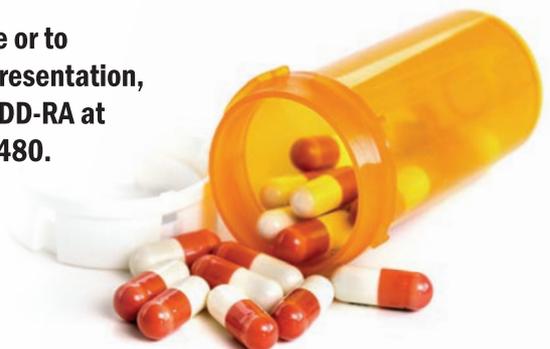


What's in your medicine cabinet?

Know the risks associated with taking prescription pain medications.

- Don't share your prescriptions.
- Safely dispose of all unused medications. For smaller quantities request a Deterra Disposal Pouch at ncadd-ra@depaul.org. For larger quantities see details on dates and locations visit www.monroecounty.gov/hhw.
- Help prevent an overdose; be prepared with Narcan training/kit.
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